

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

9 May 1960

INTERNAL O/NE (REVISED DRAFT)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Sino-Soviet Discord on the Eve of the Summit

1. Soviet detente tactics towards the West have provoked, in  
\*  
Peiping's 15 April Red Flag criticisms, the bitterest and most  
fundamental Chinese Communist disagreement with Soviet policy yet  
evidenced. We consider that the expressed Chinese discontent is al-  
most certainly genuine, and that it reflects some basic Chinese dif-  
ferences, some as yet unvoiced publicly by the Chinese, with the world-  
views and Summitry of their Soviet partner. This memorandum seeks to  
assess the sources of Chinese discontent, the Chinese motives in pub-  
lishing such sharp criticisms on the eve of the Summit, and the sig-  
nificance of present Sino-Soviet discord for the future.

---

\* "Long Live Leninism," published by the editorial department of this 25X1  
key CCP journal on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of Lenin's  
birth.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

2. The sources of Chinese Communist discontent. The root cause lies in the vast difference which exists between Soviet and Chinese internal and foreign policy situations, moods, and needs. The austere and frenetic Chinese Communist scene is far removed from the relative affluence and the relative thaw of Soviet society. The necessary crisis mood within China both creates and needs the image of imminent attack by an imperialist invader; in the Chinese view, this must not be dissipated by Soviet initiative. The Chinese consider themselves a "have-not" Communist nation, frustrated by the US from completing their civil war (the acquisition of Taiwan) and from achieving that international acceptance which they feel is due them as a near-great power; the USSR must not do detente business with this hated US which would in any way inhibit these aspirations. Peiping almost certainly aspires to become a nuclear-armed power; it may be concerned, although we have no firm indication, that Soviet negotiations with the West might in time somehow obstruct this aim. Lastly, the Chinese view of world developments is a crude one, distorted by revolutionary zeal, doctrinal chasteness, and lack of full awareness of modern weaponry; Khrushchev's detente course is thus a risky and unnecessarily passive one to the Chinese, who do not appreciate or agree with his more subtle calculus.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

3. Such considerations have found reflection in the increasingly discordant Sino-Soviet debate on foreign policy which has taken place since late 1957 -- on the estimate of the world situation and on the best ways of proceeding -- and which has now culminated in the present contention. Since the advent of Sputnik, the Chinese have held that Soviet weaponry advances have so altered the world balance of power that more forceful action can be taken to advance the Communist cause in the world; that the West is becoming weaker, more divided within itself, and more alienated from the peoples of the underdeveloped areas of the world; that while the West is still dangerous, its remaining strength should not be over-estimated; that a nuclear war would not mean annihilation, especially in view of China's vast population; and that coexistence with the West is foolhardy, since this will only be used as a breathing spell for the preparation by the West, in desperation, of a virtually certain military attack on the Bloc at some future date.

4. The Chinese have not only persisted in these views but increased the tenor of criticism. This has been especially marked since Camp David, and the more significant because of the sharp Soviet displeasure that has been openly voiced during this period

~~SECRET~~

in Peiping (in October) and, it is reported, secretly voiced to Satellite leaders in Moscow (in February). Until the Red Flag article (of 15 April), the Chinese had confined their attack largely to matters of foreign policy tactics. Now, for the first time, the Chinese state their foreign policy differences in terms of fundamental questions of Communist doctrine.

5. The Red Flag article, in addition to repeating themes of recent months, asserts that the Chinese are today's only true Leninists and that Lenin's doctrines on war, revolution, and imperialism remain "irrefutable truths." By clear implication, the Chinese accuse Khrushchev personally and the Soviets in general of being opportunistic backsliders from Leninism who are misreading the world situation, permitting themselves to be hoodwinked by the West, "emasculating" revolutionary doctrine and zeal, and endangering the Communist revolutionary movement by an apparent (to the Chinese) readiness to bargain with the West on matters of Communist principle. No significant easing of the international situation has or can take place, say the Chinese; preparation for "just" wars of defense should thus go forward. The article is especially notable for the degree of unease it shows that the Soviets may be considering some kind of course which might lessen the tempo of

-4-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Communist subversive efforts in the underdeveloped world; instead, say the Chinese, the only promising and proper way to gain power in such areas is by forceful revolution, and such movements should not be tamped down but accelerated. In the perhaps key passage of the article, the Chinese caution:

All these questions confront every serious Marxist-Leninist, and require deep consideration. It is obvious that whether these questions are viewed and handled correctly or incorrectly has a close bearing on the success or failure of the proletarian cause and the destiny of world humanity.

6. That the Soviets consider this article a frontal attack on the ideological bases of Khrushchev's present policies is indicated by the fact that Otto Kuusinen answered the Chinese criticisms in his Moscow speech of 22 April, and in so doing invoked Lenin's authority to justify the USSR's present coexistence and Sumitry policies. The issue has thus been joined, and on the doctrinal level -- always indicative that intra-Communist debate has indeed become serious.

7. Chinese Communist motives. The Chinese motives in publishing such bitter criticism at this time are probably both fundamental and tactical, and both directly related to the Summit and relatively coincidental to it. In the first place, the Chinese are

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

in basic disagreement with what they consider to be the Soviet estimate of the world situation and its optimum opportunities; to them, this estimate is incorrect and a dangerous basis for policy. This difference is aggravated by a revived mood of doctrinal assertiveness in China at the present time: "Mao Tse-tung's ideology" is being elevated and the urban commune program, it is reported, seeks to enable China to be the first society to achieve a pure state of Communism. Given this mood, the Chinese are not about to shut up, especially at the behest of a Soviet leader who is not only wrong and stupid, but a mere politician, not a theoretician. Given these considerations and Communist China's sense of foreign policy frustration, the Red Flag outburst is in one sense a natural outgrowth of more than two years of debate which has become the more contentious as Chinese views and aspirations have apparently been ignored or denied by Moscow. The Lenin anniversary offered a convenient and relevant occasion for a verbal sortie.

3. But the imminent Summit, the goal of Khrushchev's recent policies and the focus of Chinese unease, almost certainly introduced a note of urgency and sharpened the tone of Chinese comment. Here a number of considerations of tactical leverage on the USSR

~~SECRET~~

probably apply. The Chinese leaders may consider that polemics are one of the few effective weapons China has for influencing the USSR at the Summit, and in making public such sharp criticism are attempting to bring pressure to bear on Khrushchev so that he may not in fact give away anything to the West which might inhibit world revolution or Chinese aspirations. The Chinese are taking their case to world communism, perhaps appealing to certain leaders even in the USSR who may share certain of their reservations. Peiping is also going on record with world communism that its doctrinal views and estimates of the situation are correct and will be proved so, to Chinese ideological and influence benefit, once Khrushchev's experiment fails or results in no tangible rewards for the Bloc. Lastly, the Chinese are probably also accenting a refusal necessarily to be bound by any commitments Khrushchev may make, a tactic perhaps designed both to give him pause and to stimulate him to suggest further negotiations with the West in which Communist China might be a participant.

\*

---

\* The question of whether Chinese pressures may in fact constrain Khrushchev's freedom of action is discussion in \_\_\_\_\_  
"Khrushchev at the Summit."

~~SECRET~~

9. Significance for the future. The principal immediate question relates to Chinese Communist policy: are the Chinese likely to translate their certainty in the efficacy of accelerating world revolution into a renewal of the foreign policy pushiness they have at times displayed in the past? Decision for such action could spring from a combination of belligerent mood, great expectations, frustration, and effort to disrupt the Summit or some Summit aftermath. The best present outlets for such action would seem to be the exerting of strong military pressures in the Taiwan Strait or the sponsoring of heightened "armed liberation movements" in Southeast Asia.

10. While such possibilities will bear watching, we see no firm indications of any extreme Chinese action and believe it unlikely, at least for the near future. Despite discontent with its lot and with Soviet strategy and tactics, the overriding foreign policy needs of Peiping continue to be Bloc unity and Soviet military and economic support. In addition, Chinese leaders cannot be certain that extreme action would in fact achieve the results desired. Thus we anticipate that Chinese action will probably be limited in coming weeks to shrill criticism of the US; continued harping that war is inevitable and that nuclear war would not necessarily, despite Khrushchev, be madness; and perhaps a harsher

-10-

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

tone towards events in the Indochina states and some increase in military pressures in the Taiwan Strait short of those of August 1958. With respect to the Summit itself, we feel that the Chinese will probably confine their disruptive tactics to continuing polemics and to overtures for added Bloc support for their views.

11. The present discord presents a number of estimative problems for the Sino-Soviet future. Does the present disarray in Sino-Soviet relations indicate that even our considerable stress on Sino-Soviet differences in recent NIEs has not been great enough? How well do the Chinese know or estimate Soviet intentions? What is the significance, if any, of the apparent Chinese Red Flag anticipation of a Soviet willingness to make greater concessions at the Summit than Western observers have believed probable? What degree of confusion will Chinese doctrinal assertiveness create within the Bloc? What results will flow, for Khrushchev and for the Chinese, if his detente course proves to be a flop or unrewarding? What significance will continued Chinese bad temper toward both the West and the USSR have on future disarmament questions? And what effect, if any, will all this have on Communist China's acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability?

-9-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

12. Some of these questions might be answered with more certainty if current Sino-Soviet divergences were all coordinated deception, and fundamental agreement much closer than it almost certainly now is. Nevertheless, any split in the Sino-Soviet partnership is highly unlikely in the near future; each partner almost certainly needs the other too much to permit such a luxury. Short of this, the Chinese will probably continue to question the Soviet leadership's acuity and to challenge Moscow's ideological authority. This, together with probable Chinese foreign policy impatience, will in turn spur Soviet irritation. Finally, even a hardening of Soviet policy toward the West will have only a palliative, not a remedial, effect, since the basic wide variance which exists in Soviet and Chinese Communist internal and foreign policy needs will not diminish. Thus we feel that present Sino-Soviet discord will serve as a catalyst which will surface more underlying differences, and that the two allies' future policy coordination against the West may accordingly grow more difficult.

~~SECRET~~